

that did **2001: A Space Whotsit** and very clever it was too with lots of ace music that put the wind up a few people a loooooong time ago. His new film is to be called **Full Metal Jacket** and I hope he doesn't leave it so long next time.

There's a new **Alien** on the way and they're going to call it **Aliens**, which is a pretty smart title when you come to think of it. Anyway, I thought they'd left it pretty well tied-up in the last one..... lots of destruction and death and all that sort of stuff. But I was wrong and Sigourney Weaver is here to prove it.

Pop stars in films. What do you reckon of it then, eh? On my travels I hear that those two newcomers Mick Jagger and David Bowie are to appear in **Laughter in the Dark** and **The Labyrinth** respectively. It's not your uncle Cliff strutting his stuff in **Summer Holiday** is it? However D.B. does wear an odd-looking wig and comes across as all mysterious and other worldly. He's welcome down the 'Pig and Ferret' any time, just leave the wig at home ol' son.

How much do they want anyway dept. Hardly a day goes by without someone somewhere complaining about 'poor box-office returns' particularly in the ol' US of A. Take **The Color Purple** for example, a new Spielberg epic and by all accounts a fine piece. It has 'only' taken 90 million dollars. Strewth, that would keep me in beer for a while PLUS I could buy a new Transit. Some people don't know when they are well off.

Do you know what the biggest film in Rome is at the moment? **Out of Africa**, that's what. And what are our Antipodean cousins getting down to in Sydney? **Crocodile Dundee** ... fooled you that time. If this film is really about a sex-crazed reptile that took a wrong turning at Hadrian's Wall, then I want to see it.

Been hearing lots of good things about **Jagged Edge** recently with the Ed. in particular jumping up and down and foaming at the mouth. Is it good I asked? 'Is it ever, John' he replied. Which is a shame really coz my name is Darren. Bit of a card is the Ed., as you will have realised but, he can certainly whiff a good film a mile off.

And a big noise in movies for quite a while now has been **Absolute Beginners** and deservedly so. Soho looked a lot more exciting

back in the 50's with much dancing and leaping about to some pretty ace tunes. My 'lady friend' of long standing, Charmaine, was well chuffed to see David Bowie dancing on top of a typewriter and I must say the glimpse of Sade in a blue dress was a welcome sight for me. It is, as we say in the bizz, a real humdinger so take a bow Mr Temple... you of the fine lens cap.

Movie titles don't get any more sensible, do they? Never mind **Crocodile Dundee** you should hear what's coining the dollars in the US at the moment. **Critters** and **Jo Jo Dancer, Your Life Is Calling**, to name but two. Mind you, we've got a film called **Caravaggio** directed by that Derek Jarman, so who are we to talk?



Sade looking pretty wonderful in 'Absolute Beginners'.

Anybody who knows 'un bon mot' when they see one will appreciate the novels of Elmore Leonard. To date though his film

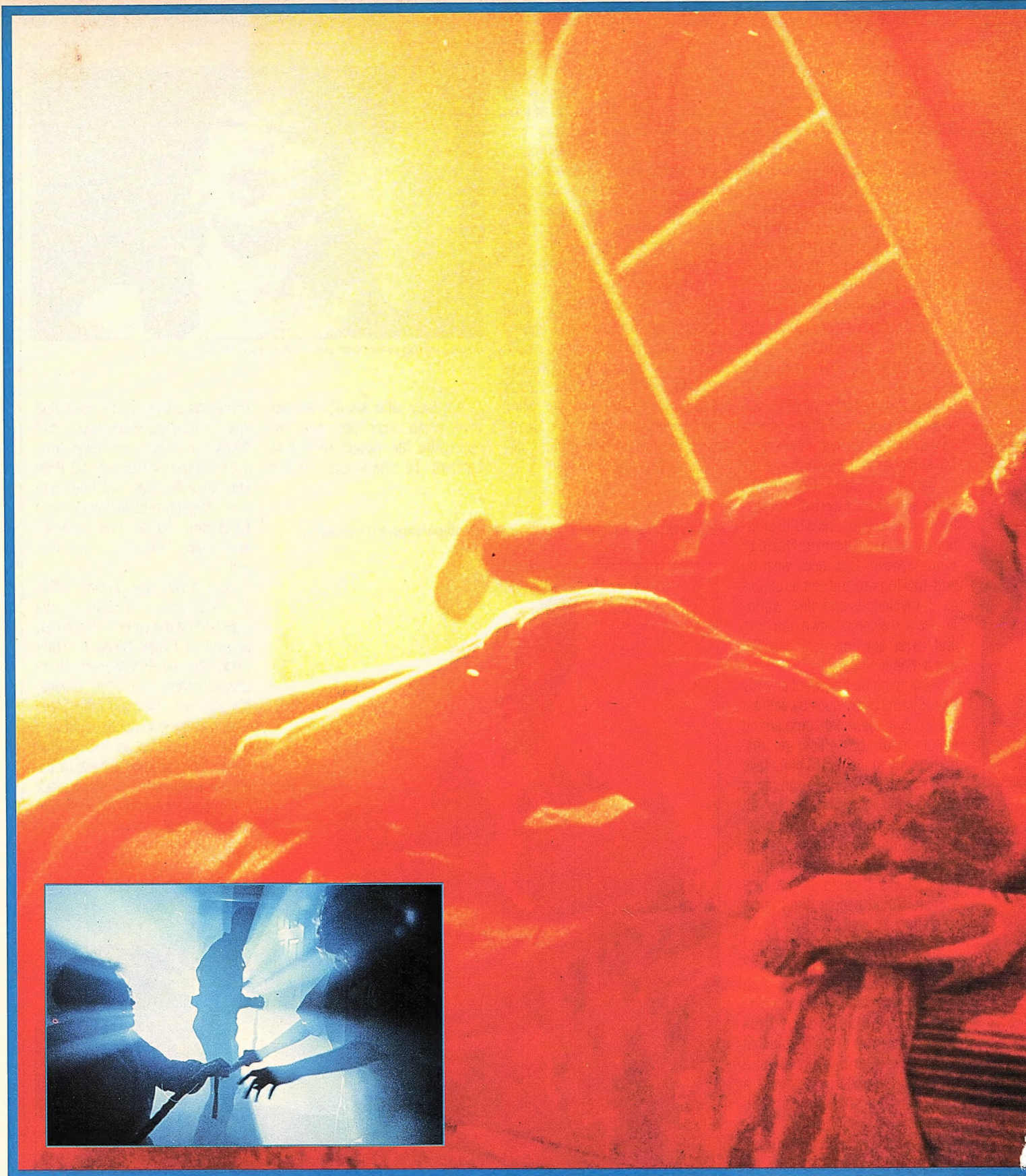
scripts have been pretty poor, and after the Burt Reynolds massacre of **Stick** I'm hoping for better from John Frankenheimer with **52 Pick Up** (Starring Roy Scheider and Ann Margret) and Al Pacino with **La Brava**. But do 'bon mots' always make 'bon cine'? I ask myself...

And finally the wizard called Oz...also known as Frank...is the man behind the camera of the new version of **Little Shop of Horrors**. Starring Rick Moranis (from **Ghostbusters**) and Ellen Greene, it's also got my main man Steve Martin as the mad dentist! And who played the dentist in the original Roger Corman movie back in the fifties? None other than Mr Jack Nicholson in one of his first film roles! Wowiee!

David Bowie looking puzzled and Kim Basinger (again) just looking.

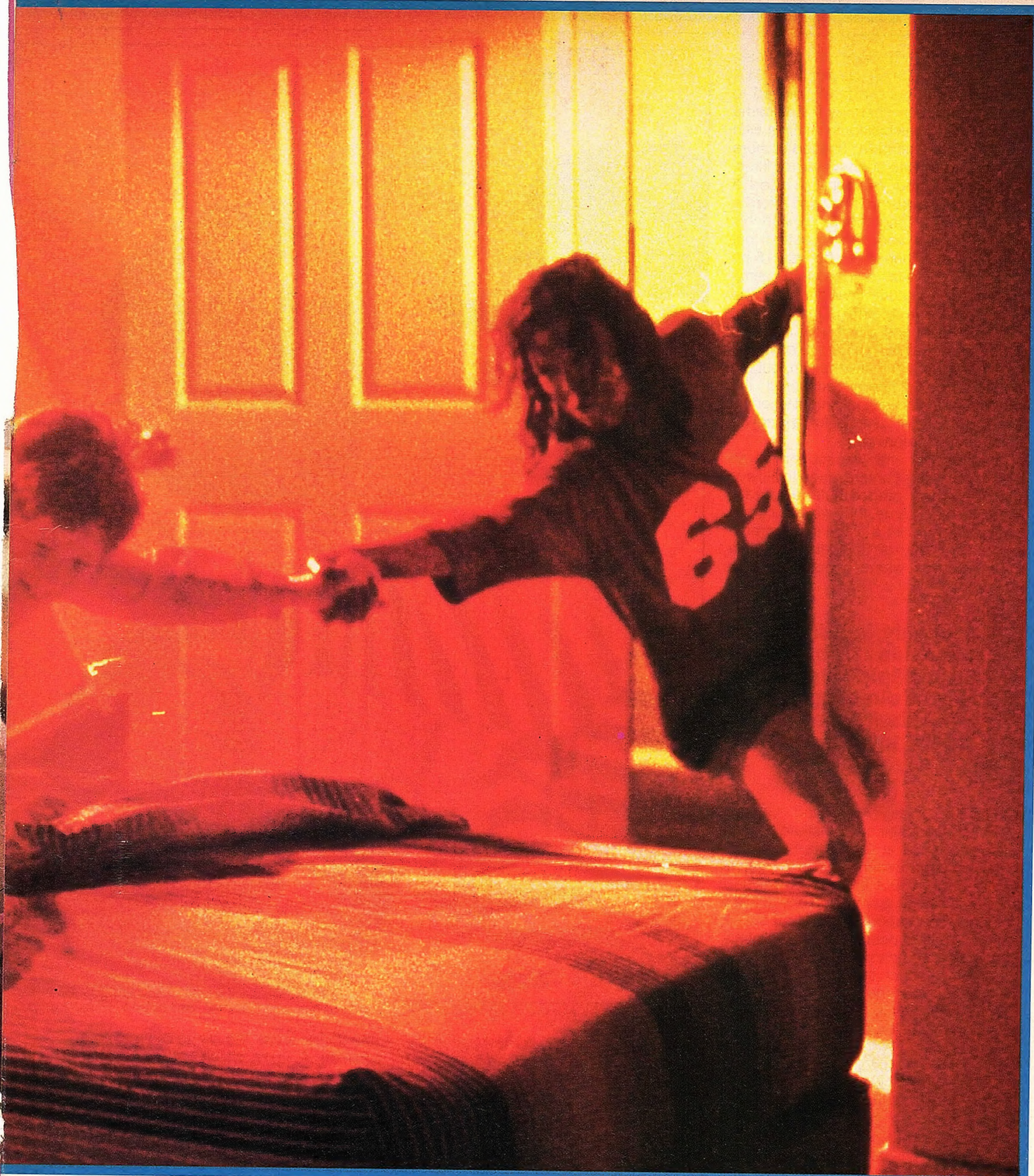






# SPIELBEI





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VIDEO WORLD AUGUST 1986

## Allan Bryce traces the development of everyone's favourite film director.

**W**hen we asked the readers of *Video World* to name their favourite film director of 1985, we were hardly surprised that the lion's share of votes went in favour of

Steven Spielberg. He is, after all, the most popular and well known of all today's film-makers, having directed five of the top ten moneymakers of all time — movies that have swelled box office tills to the tune of nearly a billion and a half dollars! Never mind the fact that the redoubtable Mr Spielberg didn't actually direct films on video release in 1985, his name was so often on our lips in conjunction with good movie entertainment, that it certainly seemed as if he did.

The most successful of all the current



"movie brats" was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on the 18th of December 1947. When he was four the family moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where he first became interested in making home movies with his dad's 8mm camera. This led to more ambitious projects such as horror films, war pictures and Westerns ("I used a cactus as a backdrop. I couldn't afford a horse.") — all shot on 8mm with his school friends and family acting out various roles. Then when he was 16 he decided to have a go at a semi-professional feature, switching to the more expensive 16mm gauge to shoot *Firelight*, a two and a half hour science-fiction piece about UFOs. It cost five hundred dollars to make the film, but the enterprising Spielberg recovered the production cost in a single night when he hired out a local cinema for a packed commercial screening!

Unfortunately, he was spending so much time with a camera glued to his eye that his school grades suffered badly. When the time came, they were not good enough to win him a place in the prestigious University of Southern California Film School — where people like John

**Suddenly, just six weeks before his 21st birthday, Steven Spielberg found himself directing the famed hollywood star Joan Crawford . . .**

Carpenter, John Milius and George Lucas learned their craft. Instead he was forced to enroll at California State University in Long Beach, California, majoring in English. But he kept on making movies in his spare time, and one of them (a 35mm short about hitchhiking) called *Amblin'* (later to become the name of his production company), received a considerable amount of acclaim and garnered awards at the Atlanta and Venice film festivals. It was this film that brought him to the attention of MCA TV's head of television films, Sidney Sheinberg, who offered the newcomer a seven year contract. Suddenly, just six weeks before his 21st birthday, Steven Spielberg found himself directing the famed Hollywood star Joan Crawford in a tv movie called *Night Gallery*. It was a dream come true, but his first experience in the big league was not a happy one.

*Night Gallery* (1969) was a three part spooker which was scripted by the legendary Rod Serling in the mann of his cult hit series *The Twilight Zone*. Spielberg's was the middle one, in which wealthy blind woman Joan Crawford convinces down and out Tom Bosley to sell her his eyesight so she will be able to see for a few hours. He does, but it happens to be the night of the New York blackout! Though Joan Crawford herself turned out to be very helpful, Spielberg recalls "I did



Spielberg instructs film star Craig T Nelson not to sit on the fence, while director Tobe Hooper enjoys a drop

an awful job. I remember I had a good tan at the time, and it left me the first day of filming. I remember doing shots through baubles hanging from chandeliers and seeing the producer on the sidelines groaning!"

After *Night Gallery* he didn't direct again for a year, during which time he tried his hand at writing screenplays. (One of them formed the basis for a little-seen 1973 flying picture called *Ace Eli and Rodger of the Skies*). But then, pleading poverty, he persuaded Universal to let him direct episodes of television shows like *Columbo*, *Owen Marshall — Counsellor At Law*, and *Marcus Welby M.D.* This time out he didn't make any mistakes, and began to build a reputation for thoroughness and planning. Among his most popular work at the time was an intriguing feature-length episode of the

thriller show *The Name of the Game* called L.A. 2017, which had newspaper publisher Gene Barry dreaming he was in the Los Angeles of the future where everybody lives underground because the pollution is so bad! This was fun, and so was *Something Evil* (1972), a neat little haunted house chiller which had Sandy Dennis, Darren McGavin and their kids moving into a possessed Pennsylvania farmhouse. With its many spooky sequences enhanced by Spielberg's clever use of camera movement, it is quite interesting in retrospect to compare it with his later box office blockbuster, *Poltergeist*.

But although Spielberg was getting quite a reputation as a competent and craftsman-like television director, he was still stuck in the tv wastelands. Determined to get into making feature films for





of the real thing on the *Poltergeist* set.

the cinema, he put his best effort into *Duel* (1972), a gripping suspense thriller whose entire plot was built around a fateful encounter on a desert highway. Dennis Weaver gave a fine performance as a mild mannered salesman being hounded into a death run by a smoke-belching ten ton petrol lorry. The film's spare and intelligent script had been a *Playboy* magazine short story dreamed up by popular science-fiction writer Richard (The Incredible Shrinking Man) Matheson after the latter had found himself in the similar situation of being forced off the road by an irate lorry driver. When Spielberg received it he knew immediately that here was a potentially excellent showcase for his filmmaking talents, and possibly his ticket out of the tv wilderness.

The first thing he did was to line up hundreds of trucks and lorries on the

Universal backlot, and choose the one that looked the most menacing. Then he went away and storyboarded the entire production: a move rare in television, where speed is of the essence. By drawing out all the camera angles, Hitchcock-style, Spielberg could construct his movie on paper before he even began filming. "On all my movies since," stated Spielberg recently, "I have had more fun making them at home on the easel, with paints, crayons, sketch pencils, than I had filming." The technique paid off admirably and enabled him to shoot in two weeks what was undoubtedly the best and most successful television movie of all time.

Under Spielberg's superbly judged direction, *Duel* became a masterpiece of mounting suspense and terror. It was an old fashioned monster movie at heart, but

the monster here was the lorry, whose driver the audiences never saw. Instead, Spielberg's camera gave the vehicle a life of its own: We see its headlights glaring menacingly out of a dark tunnel, and hear its engine growling like a huge angry beast as it chases the terrified motorist up into remote mountains for a final deadly confrontation. In the end both car and lorry destroy each other in an awesome clifftop collision that is underscored with the howls of a dying dinosaur, and as the lorry lies twisted and buckled we see engine oil dripping like blood from its damaged body...

*Duel* proved extremely popular with American television viewers, but it wasn't until some months after it aired that Universal executives decided to release it abroad as a theatrical feature. They asked Spielberg to shoot an extra 16 minutes of footage, involving Weaver's talking to his wife on the phone and a stop at a roadside diner where he tries to spot the lorry's anonymous driver among the assembled rednecks. It's interesting to note that if you look very closely you can actually see Spielberg sitting in the back seat of Dennis Weaver's car at one point.

**"I did an awful job. I remember I had a good tan at the time, and it left me the first day of filming."**

He is at the corner of the frame, and totally invisible when the movie is screened on tv. But cinema prints show him quite clearly!

Obviously not too many people noticed or cared about this though, and the newly padded feature, complete with back seat director became a huge commercial and critical hit in Europe. It took six million dollars at the box office, and when it started winning film festival prizes as well, the executives in Universal Studios black tower didn't need any more convincing that the 23-year-old Steven Spielberg had the ability to make the transition to cinema features.

His first effort for the big screen was *The Sugarland Express* (1974 - CIC), an excellent movie based on a true story about a jailbird couple (Goldie Hawn and William Atherton); they foolishly hijack a policeman (William Sachs) and his car and attempt to drive across country to Sugarland, Texas, where their baby son has been taken into care. The mood of the film is sentimental and amusing at first, later turning to tragedy as we realise what awaits our two main protagonists at the end of the line.

In fact *The Sugarland Express* turned out to be a financial disappointment for Universal, undoubtedly because of the confused way in which they attempted to sell it to the public: The poster showed a



cute picture of Goldie Hawn and a teddy bear, but it wasn't a sentimental comedy; neither was it the car chase movie that the studio expected of somebody who had already made his mark on the cinematic highway. In an effort to turn it into one they cut a whopping twenty five minutes out of the film before they sent it out to play the rounds of provincial cinemas; thus, taking away one of the movie's most crucial sequences where Hawn and Atherton watch a drive in movie screen from an adjacent car park. As the supposedly dim-witted Atherton watches the Road Runner cartoon in progress he imitates the 'beep-beeps' to Goldie's great delight. But as the thick-skinned Wylie E. Coyote misjudges his opponent and plunges off yet another precipice, we see the recognition grow on Atherton's face that he may have put himself in the same deadly position of plunging toward disaster. Suddenly it's not a funny scene any more, and the movie begins its dreamlike slide towards tragedy.

Before *Sugarland* was released, the same producers, Richard Zanuck and David Brown, signed Spielberg up to direct the screen version of Peter Benchley's bestseller *Jaws* on location in Martha's Vineyard off the coast of California. As it happened, the youthful director was lucky to keep this job for a number of reasons. For a start he had only just started filming when his first feature opened to poor box office, and some Universal executives wanted him replaced. Then he found that the veteran crew of the movie did not respond well to having such a seemingly inexperienced young fellow at the helm. By all accounts it was a nightmare of a movie to make. The producers had originally thought they could conjure up the shark that terrorised the offshore waters of the tourist resort of Amity by means of miniatures, but tests proved this a ridiculous idea, so instead they had to go to special effects ace Robert A. Mattey and ask him to build them three 25 feet long mechanical sharks that would perform on cue for the camera. Mattey did this, but his creations kept threatening to sink in the heavy seas; shooting the film's final epic battle between Roy Scheider, Robert Shaw and Richard Dreyfuss and the monstrous Bruce (so called by the director because that was the name of his lawyer!) proved an epic battle in its own right, forcing the original shooting schedule of 52 days to stretch on to 155, with the budget mounting daily!

Universal executives were really panicking now, and crew members started complaining that the production could have been wrapped up much earlier, had Spielberg been less of a perfectionist. But respected film editor Verna Fields persuaded the studio that the material coming in from the location was of excellent quality, and that they should leave Spielberg in command. After its release of course, all antipathies were forgotten.

*Jaws* quickly became the top money-



Got myself a walkin' talkin' . . .

spinner of all time, driving audiences everywhere out of the water and into the cinema where they could experience some nerve-tingling jolts. One of the movie's highspots was the moment when a frogman-suited Dreyfuss goes into the water to investigate the hull of a mysteriously abandoned vessel. As he reaches forward to examine a gaping hole below

**. . . though Spielberg admitted he was an admirer of the great filmmaker, Hitch himself was not so happy . . .**

the waterline, the audience nervously watches the water behind him in expectation of the monster shark's sudden appearance – and are jolted out of their seats when a half-eaten head falls into the beam of his flashlight! This sequence was actually added after the main bulk of the movie had been shot and was filmed in Spielberg's own swimming pool!

In praising Spielberg's work on *Jaws* many critics suggested he had the Hitchcock touch – in fact he used a Hitchcock speciality in the scene where Roy Scheider first witnesses a shark attack; utilising the master's disorientating camera tick of changing the focal field around a subject by tracking backward with the camera

while simultaneously zooming in with the lens. But though Spielberg admitted he was an admirer of the great film-maker and pleased to adopt some of his techniques, Hitch himself was not so happy: he had Spielberg forcibly removed from the set of his last movie, *Family Plot*, because he didn't want him copying any more of his ideas!

*Jaws* was a marvellous film, and it deservedly won Oscars for Verna Fields' editing and John Williams' sinister music score, though rather unfairly Spielberg himself was left out at the awards ceremony. Commenting at the time the director said "I expect I'll have to be in my late fifties before people in Hollywood recognise me as a serious filmmaker" and recent events have proved his words more prophetic than ever.

But whether Oscar liked it or not, after *Jaws* Steven Spielberg could make any movie he wanted to. He decided to go back to one of the fascinations of his youth and construct a story about UFOs, not too dissimilar to that of the plotline of his early 16mm epic *Firelight*, only this was to be made for a somewhat higher budget. Two years later after some 25 million dollars had been splashed out by Columbia, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* was ready for the public to experience – and turned out to be another massive commercial success.

The story, which was written by Spielberg himself, had power worker Roy Neary (Richard Dreyfuss) witnessing a UFO display during a blackout and then being drawn into a mystical bond with their occupants – friendly little beings that hum John Williams music, this leads him to confront an unusual destiny as an interstellar hitch-hiker in the movie's special-effects filled climax. 'It embraces a favourite theme of mine' said Spielberg at the time of the movie's release, 'which is the ultimate glorification of the common man – like the Cary Grant character from *North By Northwest*, or even the Roy Scheider character in *Jaws*. A typical guy who nothing ever happens to. Then, all of a sudden, he encounters something extraordinary and has to change his entire life in order to deal with it.'

After this, Spielberg became more interested in special effects than ever, and it almost proved his undoing. His next movie, *1941* (1979 – CIC) was packed to the brim with clever trickery – and it was also an astronomical flop. Its story was set in the title year, just after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, and concerned the efforts of a group of nutty Los Angeles residents to repel an imaginary Jap invasion, which is really only one wayward U-Boat captained by Toshiro Mifune. Cars, tanks, planes and property were obliterated in an orgy of special effects destruction that cost Universal pictures approximately 28 million dollars (one scene involving a plane crashing on Hollywood Boulevard cost a million dollars to stage and had to be shot three times!). When the movie opened to poor reviews and unexceptional takings, the



Hollywood money men suddenly realised that even wonder-kid Steven could make a mistake. As it happened some parts of the film were brilliantly done: the opening scene imitation of *Jaws* for example, where a nude swimmer suddenly finds herself raised up out of the water on top of the submarine, and the stunningly shot and edited sequence where a jitterbug contest turns into a John Wayne style fist fight (interestingly enough Spielberg repeated this almost exactly as the opening to *Indiana Jones And The Temple of Doom*). But as a whole, the pace of the film was too frenetic for most audiences – it was simply too much of a good thing, and the director commented later that the only people who had the right temperament to enjoy it were those who revelled in playing computer games.

The critics eagerly seized upon the opportunity to lambast the young director for his wastefulness. At the time the industry was also being hit by an even bigger financial disaster in the shape of Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate*, and together these two movies effectively spelled the end of the ridiculously high budget. But though *1941* still stands as Spielberg's biggest loser to date, it has now recovered its astronomical cost and is actually showing a profit for the studio, perhaps it wasn't such a disaster after all, and anyway, his later works would soon make everyone, especially Universal, forget past indiscretions.

After revising his *Close Encounters* into *The Special Edition* (1980 – RCA Columbia) by the addition of some new scenes (most notably a vast ocean liner

stranded incongruously in the Gobi Desert, and a view of the inside of the alien mothership), and the subtraction of others (removing some of the slack middle section where Dreyfuss takes his obsessions out on his family), Spielberg went on to collaborate with his friend George Lucas; a tribute to old-time movie serials that turned out to be a far bigger success than either of them had anticipated. After his *1941* debacle, Spielberg

**... it pitted wartime adventurer archaeologist Indiana Jones against evil Nazis attempting to discover the Ark of the Covenant.**

shot *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981 – CIC) with speed and efficiency, having comprehensively storyboarded it first, for what by Hollywood standards was a reasonably low budget (nine million dollars).

The film was a resounding hit. A grand homage to the thrilling "with-one-bound-he-was-free" cliff-hangers of the 1930s and 1940s, it pitted wartime adventurer archaeologist Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) against evil Nazis attempting to discover the location of the sacred Ark of the Covenant – which possesses awesome supernatural powers. From its opening scenes where Jones braves the

perils of an ancient Inca tomb, to the film's grisly climax where the Nazis confront the deadly unleashed power of the Ark, the movie never hit a false note. Whereas most of *1941* was midjudged and over-the-top, everything about *Raiders* was right on target, and audiences loved it.

His next movie as director turned out to be an even greater success. Within weeks of its release, *E.T. The Extraterrestrial* became the biggest moneymaker in film history, ousting his mate George Lucas' *Star Wars* from the top spot. Spielberg's story of a lost alien who is accidentally left behind on Earth and adopted by a lonely and fatherless young boy was a canny reworking of *Peter Pan* – with a dash of his own *Close Encounters* thrown in for good measure. By shooting it mainly from a child's point of view and eliciting fine performances from his youthful cast, Spielberg managed to capture a sense of wonder that captivated audiences of all ages. Unfortunately for folks who prefer to watch movies in their living room, the director has already stated he has no intention of ever allowing the film to come out on video, and plans to issue it Disney fashion every few years for fresh generations of cinema-goers to enjoy.

In the early 80s Steven Spielberg imitated Disney even further by turning his hand to producing a series of hit movies aimed at a predominantly young audience, that had his particular style stamped all over them. He started with the low-budget comedies *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* and *Used Cars* (1981 – RCA Columbia), then scored a major success

*Take 207. Please God, let it go right this time!*





with *Poltergeist* (1982 – MGM/UA), the spooky tale of a typical suburban family (much like the one in *E.T.*) who find to their cost that their house is built on top of an old Indian cemetery. Once again the real stars here were the kids, led by Heather O'Rourke as the little girl spirited away by mischievous ghosts coming from the television set! The film was ably directed by Tobe (Texas Chainsaw Massacre) Hooper, but the Spielberg influence was obvious, and there were stories filtering out of Hollywood about his having stepped in to direct many sequences himself.

Since then the Spielberg-produced hits have kept coming: From the wickedly funny *Gremlins* (1984 – Warners), through to the wonderful *Back To The Future*, a movie that threatens to topple the director's own *E.T.* from the number one spot. Not all have been so successful, for example *Twilight zone The Movie*

lavish rendition of *Anything Goes* choreographed in grand Busby Berkeley style, and indeed, anything did! Critics carped that there was just too much action and excitement in the movie and that it could have used a better plot in between set-pieces, but audiences everywhere loved it.

But now that Spielberg had become recognised as the most bankable film director in the world, critics began to accuse him of squandering his talent on juvenile cinematic trifles. Perhaps because of this, he decided when next he put on his director's hat it would be to shoot a serious adult subject for a change. The result was *The Color Purple* (1986), a drama about the trials and tribulations of a strong-willed coloured woman in the deep South of the 1940s. Enlivened by a fine performance from newcomer Whoopie Goldberg, this was

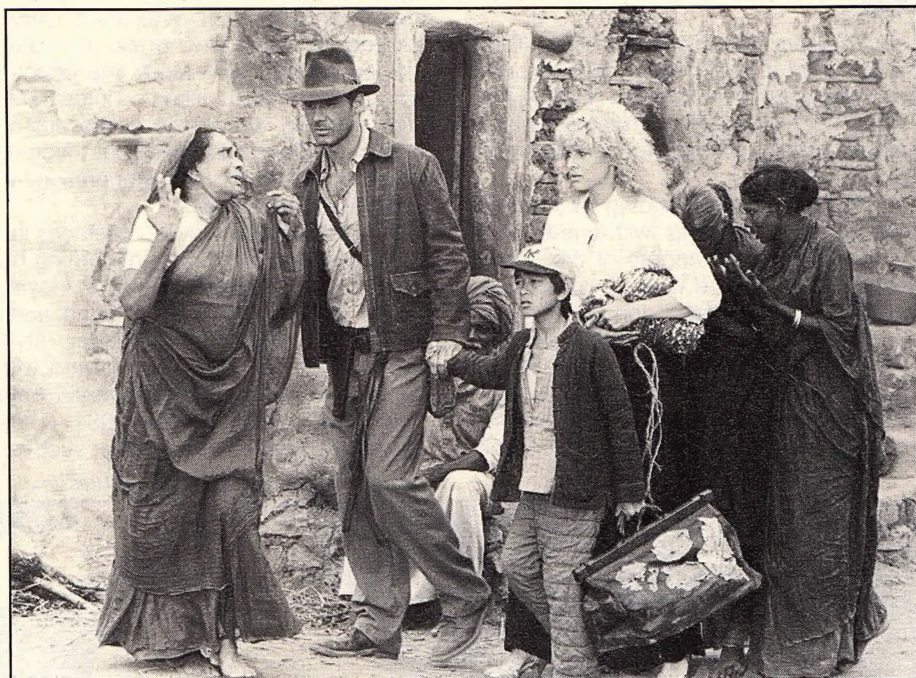
on the production have stated that the producer actually filmed the movie's slapstick-style opening) the film is a loud, brash piece of mass entertainment – *The Famous Five* meet *Indiana Jones* – this is sure to appeal to younger audiences.

Nowadays Steven Spielberg doesn't have to worry about where he is going to get finance for his movies. It's a well known fact that if he said he was going to film the Los Angeles telephone directory there would still be a queue to back him! He conducts his business from his expansive Amblin' Entertainment offices at Universal City; the company that once expressed dissatisfaction at the way he handled a television movie have now built him a three million dollar headquarters, complete with a 1940s type candy store and New York style delicatessen that serves lunch for employees and guests! It was from there that he recently announced his television anthology series *Amazing Stories* – 44 episodes over two years at a staggering (for tv) cost of 20 million dollars. He has since directed the first show, *Ghost Train*, and another one entitled *The Mission*; other

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top names lined up to direct include Burt Reynolds, Clint Eastwood, Peter (2010) Hyams, Peter (Witness) Weir and Martin Scorsese. Spielberg joked at a press conference that even David (A Passage To India) Lean, who works as slowly as any film-maker, said "Look – give me six months and I'll be happy to do a half hour."

On the movie side we currently have the Spielberg-produced hit *Young Sherlock Holmes* and the *Pyramid of Fear* doing the rounds; while *The Money Pit*, an hilarious story of the tribulations awaiting young couple Tom Hanks and Shelley Long when they move into their new house, is breaking box office records in the States – this was directed by former actor Richard Benjamin. Then there's *Batteries Not Included*, another Spielberg-produced effort about a flying saucer, which we should be seeing here about Christmas time. As director, he plans to shoot *Peter Pan* sometime soon, and pre-production is already underway on a third *Indiana Jones* movie. In fact with all this going on it seems that whether he wins any Academy Awards or not the talented Mr Spielberg will be an entertainment force to be reckoned with for many years to come. I leave you with this recent quote from our celebrated editor: "As far as honours are concerned, what's an Oscar anyway in comparison to winning the *Video World* Best Director award?"



A man in a hat, a boy with a bag ... *The Temple of Doom*.

(1983 – Warners) was a largely disappointing quartet of fantasy tales, each with a different director, gleaned from the old Rod Serling series; it would undoubtedly have turned out better had its making not been blighted by a tragic helicopter crash that took the life of the star of the first episode, actor Vic Morrow. After this happened, Spielberg abandoned plans to shoot an original story with complex special effects; instead he quickly churned out an overly sentimental yarn about a bunch of old folks who discover the secret of being young again – an idea carried through a lot more successfully in the recent *Cocoon*.

In 1984 he made *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, the long-awaited sequel to *Raiders*, which started out in Shanghai in 1935 with Harrison Ford's indestructible hero picking up the shrill Kate Capshaw and exuberant youngster Ke Huy Quan, and then being plunged into a helter-skelter series of hair-raising incidents. The credits came up over a

a commercial and critical success that received a host of Oscar nominations, including one for Best Picture. But amazingly the Academy snubbed him by not giving him a nomination as Best Director. The eventual winner, Pollack (for *Out of Africa*) stated "I guess they figure Steven is too successful already..."

The latest Spielberg-produced movie to entertain video audiences is *The Goonies*, a kiddie adventure scripted by Christopher Columbus (no, not the one who discovered America); it tells of the way the title bunch of kids discover an ancient map that leads them to treasure buried in a hidden pirate galleon. But before they can claim it, they have to face numerous booby traps, ward off "Big Mama Fratelli" (Anne Ramsay) and her gun-toting criminal family and try and save their leader Mikey (Sean Astin) from having his house torn down by a mean property developer. As slickly directed by Richard (Superman) Donner under Spielberg's watchful eye (many insiders